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Wig Wisdom – Understanding Hairpiece Types, Attachments, Costs, and care Techniques

By Maggie Kay

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Modern hairpieces or wigs have definitely evolved from the bulky, detectable toupees of yesteryear. Today's wigs are lighter, fit better, and look and feel more natural.

What materials are in a hairpiece?

The best hairpieces are custom–made. They tend to be more expensive than ready–made hairpieces because they are constructed with quality materials and made to fit your scalp perfectly. Quality custom–made hairpieces are created with human hair. The color, texture, and density of the client's hair are matched to make the wig completely undetectable on the scalp. Ready–made hairpieces are usually constructed with synthetic materials.

The foundation for a hairpiece is made with either a section of netting or silicone. Either of these foundations can be easily shaped around the balding area and are simple to attach with adhesives or clips. Men buying hairpieces tend to prefer the silicone foundation for its natural look.

How are hairpieces attached?

Adhesives, clips or metal snaps can attach hairpieces in place. Each method has its own pros and cons.

Adhesives: Double–sided tape is used to attach the hairpiece and makes for easy fastening and removal. The downfall to adhesives, however, is that they tend to leave a sticky residue on the scalp and on the underside of the hairpiece. The tape can also become unglued if you perspire heavily or go swimming.

Clips: Metal clips attach to the underside of the hairpiece and fasten to your natural hair. The clips are secure and easy to remove. However, many men worry about the hairpiece falling out of place when engaged in any sort of rigorous activity.

Snaps: Snaps differ from clips because they are tied or sewn to your natural hair. They cannot be removed any time you wish and you will require the expertise of a technician to help you take off the wig. Snaps may cause an inconvenience because they must be relocated as your hair grows. Another downside to snaps is that they do not allow daily cleansing of your scalp.

How much do hairpieces cost?

The price of a hairpiece varies greatly and depends on many factors. These include the quality of hair used, whether the wig is ready-made or custom-made and the selected method of attachment.

Ready-made synthetic wigs can be purchased for as little as \$40.00 through mail order catalogs or in boutiques while custom-made hairpieces created with quality human hair can cost as much as \$4,000.

How do I care for my hairpiece?

Care for your hairpiece as you would care for your own hair; it requires the same attention. Of course, hairpieces made with good quality human hair need greater care than synthetic wigs.

Human hair wigs require shampooing and conditioning about every 7–10 days. They can be either air-dried or blow-dried on a low heat setting.

Synthetic wigs require washing in cool water about every 7–10 days. They must be left on a towel to dry. Hot water and hair dryers must never be used.

About the Author – Maggie Kay is a freelance writer from Montreal and is the head researcher and content manager of

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Wigs - Choosing And Caring For A Wig

By Lucy Bartlett

Why do people wear wigs? There are several reasons and the most relevant reason is to hide a bald head and show a stylish, fashionable and aesthetic profile. Wigs are mostly made of horse-hair, human hair or synthetic hair. Wig is a short form for the 17th century English word "periwig". Actors wear wigs to get the nearest resemblance to the character they portray. Wigs have been used since ancient times. Egyptians used wigs to protect their clean shaven head from the sun. Romans, Greeks, Phoenicians and Assyrians also used wigs for style and to cover their head.

Wigs contain the cap which is its base, where the hair is attached. Caps are available in different types and hair is stuck to the cap using numerous different techniques. Hair is attached in wefts on the wig. Hair strings doubled over and closely sewn together in longer strands is the process by which wigs are

made.

Wigs made from human hair have a very natural look. Depending upon the personal tastes, the human hair wigs can be colored, styled, cut or "permed". These wigs need lot of care and they are more expensive. Similar to human hair, the wigs are also to be cleaned with shampoo, dried, and conditioned to preserve its natural look and feel. People who do not have the time or inclination to do these chores have the option of a synthetic blend wig resembling human hair.

Most of the good quality synthetic wigs are identical to human hair wigs. They are not very expensive and need very little care and maintenance. The synthetic wig retains the curl, wave, texture and volume due to the "memory" of the monofilament fiber hair. They get damaged when hair dryers, curling irons or hot rollers are used to get a wave.

What should be the correct size of the wig? Most of the wigs fit a head circumference of 21.5 inches to 22.5 inches. The wig should be worn on the natural hairline, nearly four fingers above the eyebrows. In the back, pull down the wig to the natural hairline. Using the elastic tab and Velcro provided in the back, adjust the wig to get a comfortable and secure fit.

Nearly 10 to 30 percent of excess hair is provided in most wigs so it is advisable to avail the services of a professional hair stylist to fine tune the wig so that it suits your features and gives a stylish look.

The wigs should be stored on a wig stand or a mannequin when it is not used so that the shape is properly preserved.

Perspiration, environment and lifestyle are some of the factors to be taken into account when deciding the frequency of cleaning the wig. Normally it is advisable to clean the wig after a fortnight's use. Strictly follow the guidelines given by the manufacturer, for cleaning and conditioning the wig.

There are special styling accessories such as conditioners, hair sprays and shampoos to keep the wig clean. Cool water should be used to rinse the wig after the conditioning process. Leave the wig to dry naturally and avoid scrubbing the wig.

Lucy Bartlett is a proud contributing author. Find more articles at

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